

VOICES/VOCES: Video Opportunities for Innovative Condom Education and Safer Sex



The Research

The Science Behind the Package

VOICES/VOCES is a single-session, video-based HIV/STD prevention program designed to encourage condom use and improve condom negotiation skills. The program is based on the theory of reasoned action, which explains how behaviors are guided by attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and expectations of other persons' reactions. VOICES/VOCES is grounded in extensive formative research exploring the culture- and gender-based factors that can facilitate behavior change. An evaluation of the intervention showed that VOICES/VOCES is effective when delivered at a "teachable moment," for instance when a visit to an STD clinic may motivate a person to change behavior.

Target Population

African-American and Latino adult men and women clinic clients

Intervention

Health educators convene groups of 4-8 clinic patients in a room that allows privacy for discussion. Groups are gender- and ethnic-specific, so that participants can develop prevention strategies appropriate for their culture. Information on HIV risk behaviors and condom use is delivered by videos, facilitated group discussion, and a poster board presenting features of various condom brands in English and Spanish. Two culturally specific videos are used: one for African-American participants and a bilingual video for Latinos. Skills in condom use and negotiation are modeled in the videos, then role-played and practiced by participants during the discussion that follows. At the end of the single, 45-minute session, participants are given samples of the types of condoms they have identified as best meeting their needs.

Research Results

After the VOICES/VOCES intervention participants had:

- Increased knowledge about the transmission of HIV and other STD
- A more realistic assessment of their personal risk
- Greater likelihood of getting condoms and intending to use them regularly
- Fewer repeat STD infections

For Details on the Research Design

O'Donnell, L.N., San Doval, A., Duran, R., and O'Donnell, C. (1995). Video-based sexually transmitted disease patient education: Its impact on condom acquisition. *American Journal of Public Health*, 85(6), 817-822.

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The Intervention

A Package Developed from Science

Replicating Effective Programs (REP) is a CDC-initiated project that identifies HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. REP supports the original researchers in developing a user-friendly package of materials designed for prevention providers. VOICES/VOCES is one of the REP interventions. The VOICES/VOCES intervention package is the product of extensive collaboration among researchers, health department officials, and representatives from community-based HIV, STD, and family planning service organizations. The package was refined through pilot testing in community-based clinics, with non-research staff at these sites helping to identify key strategies for implementation. VOICES/VOCES is meant to supplement, rather than supplant, existing services.

Core Elements

Core elements are intervention components that must be maintained without alteration to ensure program effectiveness. The core elements of VOICES/VOCES include:

- Viewing culturally-specific videos portraying condom negotiation
- Convening small group skill-building sessions to work on overcoming barriers to condom use
- Educating program participants about different types of condoms and their features
- Distributing samples of condoms identified by participants as best meeting their needs

Package Contents

- Preview Guide of materials for agency administrators
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) planning and implementation manual for program staff
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) condom feature poster board displaying a variety of commercially available condoms and descriptions of their unique features
- Two videos developed specifically for the VOICES/VOCES intervention: *Porque Sí* targeting Latino men and women, and *Love Exchange*, targeting African Americans

Intervention Orientation

Administrators from agencies adopting VOICES/VOCES attend a half-day orientation to the intervention, which describes its objectives and resource needs. Program staff attend a 2-day training in which they learn how to conduct the intervention, practice group facilitation skills, and identify agency-specific implementation strategies.

Technical Assistance

VOICES/VOCES staff problem-solve with adopting agencies to achieve an effective balance between maintaining core elements and tailoring to local needs. Staff address implementation concerns, answer questions, and provide advice. These consultations are done through telephone calls, e-mail, and on-site visits. VOICES/VOCES staff also are available to conduct booster sessions for agency program staff to refine their ability to deliver the intervention.

Timeline for Availability

Pilot testing, revision, and refinement of the package is complete. The bilingual final version is expected to be available in 1999. A Spanish version is expected to be available by early 2000.

For More Information on the VOICES/VOCES Package

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